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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/549,497

09/19/2005

James Peter Mason

125380

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25944

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06/27/2007

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC

P.O. BOX 19928

ALEXANDRIA, VA 22320

EXAMINER

FERNSTROM, KURT

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3711

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

06/27/2007

PAPER

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b> 10/549,497	<b>Applicant(s)</b> MASON, JAMES PETER	
	<b>Examiner</b> Kurt Fernstrom	<b>Art Unit</b> 3711	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on \_\_\_\_.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 24-45 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 24-45 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
    Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
    Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)                               | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                      | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application                      |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____  |

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 32 and 34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In claim 32, the phrase "as it is inherently porous and can absorb a significant amount of water" is vague because it is unclear whether it describes a reason for providing the recited material, or whether it is intended to add structural limitations to the claim. In claim 34, the claim ends with the word "foamed", suggesting that a word may have been inadvertently omitted from the claim.

Clarification is required.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 24-31, 33, 35-38, 40, 41, 44 and 45 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pereira in view of Rebbeck. Pereira discloses a terrain model element comprising a base 8 having adhered on an upper face thereon a shaped

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layer 2 comprised substantially of latex. Pereira fails to disclose the use of foamed plastic in the base. However, this material is well known in terrain model devices, as disclosed for example in column 3, lines 1-28 of Rebbeck. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the relevant art to modify the teachings of Pereira as viewed in combination with Rebbeck by providing foamed plastic for the purpose of providing a durable yet flexible base. With respect to claim 25, the bases of Pereira and Rebbeck are sheet-like. With respect to claims 26 and 37, the foam of Rebbeck is flexible. With respect to claim 27, the base of Pereira is molded onto the latex layer. With respect to claim 28, the shaped layer of Pereira appears to be within the claimed thickness, particularly given that Pereira discloses at column 2, line 29 a "relatively thin" layer. With respect to claims 29 and 36, Pereira discloses a material 5 which substantially fills a cavity shape of the shaped layer. Viewed with Rebbeck, it would have been obvious to fill the cavities with a foamed plastic. With respect to claim 30, Pereira further discloses at column 2, lines 44-50 that the material "**preferably** fill[s] the deep depressions", thus suggesting hollow parts as claimed. With respect to claim 33, Pereira discloses in column 3, lines 22-33 a coating of paint. With respect to claim 35, Rebbeck discloses a plurality of elements located alongside each other to provide a continuous terrain appearance. With respect to claim 38, the shaped layer of Pereira comprises an undercut shape. With respect to claims 40, 41 and 44, Pereira discloses a method substantially as claimed. The step of pouring out excess liquid is considered to be an obvious variation on the teachings of Pereira, which include a step of letting the

liquid latex dry. With respect to claim 45, Pereira discloses a terrain model element as claimed.

Claim 32 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pereira in view of Rebbeck, and further in view of Cummings. Pereira as viewed in combination with Rebbeck discloses all of the limitations of the claims with the exception of the use of plaster-of-paris. However, this feature is well known, as disclosed for example in column 5, lines 52-54 of Brokaw. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the relevant art to modify the teachings of Pereira as viewed in combination with Rebbeck by providing a plaster of paris mold for the purpose of absorbing water.

Claim 39 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pereira in view of Rebbeck, and further in view of Brokaw. Pereira as viewed in combination with Rebbeck discloses all of the limitations of the claims with the exception of the hexagonal shape of the modules. However, this feature is well known, as disclosed for example in column 2, lines 9-13 of Brokaw. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the relevant art to modify the teachings of Pereira as viewed in combination with Rebbeck by providing hexagonal modules for the purpose of providing more variability in the combinations that can be created.

Claims 42 and 43 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pereira in view of Rebbeck, and further in view of "Casting Plasticine". Pereira as viewed in combination with Rebbeck discloses all of the limitations of the claims with the exception of the use of alcohol as recited. However, this step is known, as disclosed for example page 7 of Casting Plasticine. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary

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skill in the relevant art to modify the teachings of Pereira as viewed in combination with Rebbeck by applying alcohol to the mold prior to use for the purpose of facilitating the absorption of water.

### ***Conclusion***

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Taggart, Brown, Knoll, Rohan, Giamportone, Lindsay, Jensen, disclose various terrain models. "GM Foam Facts" and "Mask Makers' Paradise" disclose molding techniques.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kurt Fernstrom whose telephone number is (571) 272-4422. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 9:30-6:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Gene Kim can be reached on 571 272-4463. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

KF  
June 21, 2007



**KURT FERNSTROM  
PRIMARY EXAMINER**